

portion having a liquid permeable body faceable cover layer, a liquid impermeable garment faceable barrier layer, an absorbent element therebetween, the main body portion further having first and second longitudinal edges opposite each other defining a width dimension, a central longitudinal axis parallel to the longitudinal edges, first and second transverse edges opposite each other defining a length dimension;

a central region having first and second distal ends opposite each other defining a length that is sufficient to cover the woman's labia majora in use;

a first end region, extending from the first distal end of the central region to the first transverse edge and being adapted to cover at least a portion of the woman's mons pubis in use;

a second end region, extending from the second distal end of the central region to the second transverse edge and being adapted to cover at least a portion of the woman's posterior perineum in use; and

at least two longitudinally extending hinges located substantially within the center ~~central~~ region adjacent to and inward from each longitudinal edge between the central longitudinal axis and the first and second longitudinal edges, respectively, each hinge adapted to provide a longitudinally extending preferential bending axis, said hinges being spaced apart along at least a portion of their length, wherein at least one hinge has a radius of curvature and an adjacent hinge is substantially straight.

2. (Previously Amended) The sanitary napkin according to claim 1 wherein the hinge that has a radius of curvature is closer to the central longitudinal axis than the hinge that is substantially straight.

3. (Previously Amended) The sanitary napkin according to claim 1 wherein, the hinge that is substantially straight is closer to the central longitudinal axis than the hinge that has a radius of curvature.

4. (Previously Amended) The sanitary napkin according to claim 1 wherein the hinges are co-terminous and contact one another at a respective distal end of each hinge.

5. (Previously Amended) The sanitary napkin according to claim 1 wherein the hinges are formed from a material adapted to impart additional structural rigidity relative to an adjacent region in the absorbent element, the material being selected from the group consisting of a sphagnum-moss containing insert, a densified channel, a strip of polymeric foam, and combinations thereof.

6. The sanitary napkin according to claim 5 wherein the hinges are formed as densified channels.

7. The sanitary napkin according to claim 6 wherein the density of each channel is at least 0.5 g/cc.

8. The sanitary napkin according to claim 1 further comprising a densified end channel in at least one transverse end.

9. The sanitary napkin according to claim 8 wherein said densified end channel is spaced apart from said hinges by at least 3 mm.

10. (Presently Amended) A sanitary napkin for use by a woman for feminine hygiene and adapted to be worn in an undergarment, comprising a main body portion having a liquid permeable body faceable cover layer, a liquid impermeable garment faceable barrier layer, an absorbent element therebetween, the main body portion further having first and second longitudinal edges opposite each other defining a width dimension, a central longitudinal axis parallel to the longitudinal edges, first and second transverse edges opposite each other defining a length dimension;

a central region having first and second distal ends opposite each other defining a length that is sufficient to cover the woman's labia majora in use;

a first end region, extending from the first distal end of the central region to the first transverse edge and being adapted to cover at least a portion of the woman's mons pubis in use;

a second end region, extending from the second distal end of the central region to the second transverse edge and being adapted to cover at least a portion of the woman's posterior perineum in use; and

D | at least two longitudinally extending hinges located substantially within the ~~center~~ central region adjacent each longitudinal edge between the central longitudinal axis and the first and second longitudinal edges, respectively, each hinge adapted to provide a longitudinally extending preferential bending axis, said ~~hinge~~ at least two longitudinally extending hinges being spaced apart along at least a portion of their length, wherein said at least two hinges each have a radius of curvature and wherein one hinge has a radius of curvature greater than an adjacent hinge and wherein the sanitary napkin preferentially bends along the hinge.

11. (Previously Amended) The sanitary napkin according to claim 10 wherein a first hinge has a greater radius of curvature relative to a second hinge and is closer to the central longitudinal axis than the second hinge that has a lower radius of curvature relative to the first hinge.

12. (Previously Amended) The sanitary napkin according to claim 10 wherein the first hinge has a lower radius of curvature and is closer to the central longitudinal axis than the second hinge that has a greater radius of curvature relative to the first hinge.